



FIRST THINGS FIRST

48 West Highway 264
Quality Inn Office Complex
Post Office Box 2449
Window Rock, Arizona 86515

www.azftf.gov

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Vice Chair

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Vacant

January 22, 2010

Chairman Lynn and Members of the State Board
First Things First
4000 N. Central Avenue, Suite 800
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Dear Chairman Lynn and Members of the Board:

The Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council wishes to present two strategies as part of our FY 2010 Funding Plan for your consideration. The first strategy, **Expanding Access to Child Care**, was initially presented in 2009, but at your request this strategy was returned to the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council for further development. We have taken into consideration the suggestions and direction provided to us by the Board and by FTF staff and are pleased to resubmit the revised strategy for your consideration. The second strategy, **Communications**, is a new addition to the Navajo Nation FY2010 Funding Plan.

Expanding Access to Child Care

Many of the child care centers on the Navajo Nation are in dire need of facility improvements. In order to expand access to quality child care, the need for adequate and safe facilities must first be addressed. To address this need, this strategy will offer facility improvement grants to qualified child care providers, working within the First Things First Construction Policy.

Proposals will be considered from new and existing child care centers that demonstrate the child care facility is in need of repairs, renovations, or expansion; that include a specific plan for sustainability and a staffing plan that will maximize the number of children served; and that demonstrate a plan for appropriate maintenance of the facility. Child care centers will be responsible for all costs associated with program operations, including staff salaries, supplies, utilities and building maintenance. Grant awards will be contingent upon the grantee providing the required 50% matching funds.

Communications

This new communications strategy focuses on the uniqueness of the Navajo Nation's geographic, social, belief, and communication systems, which differ greatly from other Arizona communities and municipalities. These differences necessitate a comprehensive communication plan that will both inform and educate our local communities, using approaches such as informational radio, newspaper articles, billboards, and fair and rodeo sponsorships. The need for implementation of this strategy is immediate, as the present lack of awareness on the Navajo Nation of First Things First is impeding our ability to move the work



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forward. Communications efforts will be done in close coordination with the First Things First Communications Division.

Our intention and vision for each strategy remains true to our original intent: to address the greatest needs of the youngest children with effective, well designed and efficient strategies, which will increase quality opportunities and change outcomes for the young children of the Navajo Nation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

Jenny Rodgers
Vice-Chair
Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council

NAVAJO NATION REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL
Revised Strategy
January 2010

Strategy # 2 Expanding Access to Child Care: Facility Improvement Grants for Early Care and Education Programs

Many of the child care centers on the Navajo Nation are in dire need of facility improvements. Many of the Head Start programs are housed in aging facilities that require improvements to comply with basic health and safety standards. Many of the 12,132 young children in the region have no access to center-based early care and education because the number of operational centers is quite limited compared to the need. There are many challenges facing the Nation in being able to provide high quality early care and education to the youngest children. The challenge this strategy seeks to address is the need for adequate and safe facilities. To address this need, this strategy will offer facility improvement grants to qualified early care and education centers following the First Things First Construction Policy.

Proposals will be considered from new and existing child care centers that demonstrate the child care facility is in need of repairs, renovations, or expansion; that include a specific plan for sustainability and a staffing plan that will maximize the number of children served; and that demonstrate a plan for appropriate maintenance of the facility. New construction and building purchase may also be considered, if all of the guidelines in the First Things First Construction Policy are met. Child care centers will be responsible for all costs associated with program operations, including staff salaries, supplies, utilities and building maintenance. Grant awards will be contingent upon the grantee providing the required 50% matching funds.

The following considerations (taken from the Construction Policy) will be addressed by centers seeking these facility improvement grants:

- Evidence of a strong need for the entity, including demographics of the market that will be served, and existing methods to deliver services to children five and younger;
- A functional organization chart and detailed resumes of key personnel;
- A commitment of on-going support from the community for the capital improvement;
- How funding such capital improvement will enable the Region to address the specific priority needs of children five and under;
- What funds will be available to sustain program operations if the capital request is approved;
- A description of other efforts to meet the capital needs and a narrative that describes how no other resources exist (other than any necessary matching funds) in the community to meet this need;
- A description of how project costs and the quality of the construction will be controlled during the construction or renovation process and what approval process will be utilized at the end of the project to ensure the work was completed within appropriate construction standards;
- A description of the ownership and planned maintenance for the capital asset should the entity no longer utilize the asset for the purpose for which funding support was approved by the Board;
- Verification of financial stability of the entity, plus written confirmation that it has adequate business

controls in place (Applicants for funding toward construction or purchase of real property will be required to submit to First Things First a copy of its most recent independent audit. In lieu of an independent audit, applicants are required to submit proof of State of Arizona business registration or registration with the appropriate tribal government, a 5-year financial forecast, and certified banking relationship information);

- Demonstration of understanding and compliance with all applicable State, local and tribal building and operating regulations. For new construction and/or use of trust lands located on tribal lands, the Regional Council must assure that all applicable legal issues such as land use planning, tribal environmental regulation, financing, construction design and architecture agreements have been reviewed by the appropriate cultural resource and tribal authority.
- The amount and source of the 50% matching funds required under this guideline for specific capital requests submitted to the Board of First Things First after 8/25/09;
- A written understanding that the Board may require a deed or title restriction or other requirement for repayment of its funds used for a capital expenditure in the event of the disposal or change in use of the asset; and
- Any other significant information that facilitated the Regional Council in making a funding recommendation.

The Regional Partnership Council's decision to provide facility improvement grants will bring the region's child care system much closer to its goal of meeting the needs of all its people and providing high quality early care and education to its youngest children. This will not only enhance the child care and education picture for families; it will further fuel the engines of the region's economy. The Regional Council has learned what needs to be done to support the early care and education community on the Nation. With the support and attention of our state leadership, we are well positioned to take a quantum leap into the future by stabilizing and increasing the effectiveness of the child care infrastructure on the Navajo Nation.

Lead Goal: Quality and Access

Goal: (1) FTF will improve access to quality early care and education programs and settings.

Key Measures:

Total number of children enrolled and vacancies in regulated early care and education programs as a proportion of total population birth to age five.

Target Population: Infant/Toddler/Preschool child care centers

Proposed Service Numbers	Proposed Service Numbers	Proposed Service Numbers	Proposed Service Numbers
	8 centers	8 centers	8 centers

Performance Measures SFY 2010-2012

- Number of children enrolled in early care and education programs
- Ratio of staff to students in participating early childhood programs
- Number early childhood centers/homes receiving expansion and quality improvement support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of early childhood providers applying for tribal or other regulation or license/certification/accreditation 	
<p>How is this strategy building on the service network that currently exists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing early care and education centers on the Navajo Nation will be able to make needed facility improvements. Capital expenditures will require 50% matching funds from funding sources outside of FTF. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the opportunities for collaboration and alignment: This strategy will build on our assets to support grantees in moving toward quality early childhood education. It will encourage currently operating programs and centers to expand their services to include children not currently being served. 	
SFY2010 Expenditure Plan for Proposed Strategy:	
Population-based Allocation for proposed strategy:	\$425,998
<p>Budget Justification: <i>The Regional Council will receive and review applications from programs that will include budgets for facility improvements.</i></p>	

Strategy 12: Increase Public Awareness about First Things First and the Early Childhood Development and Health programs and services available throughout the Region

Strategy Description:

The Navajo Nation Region is isolated not only in geography but also in the type of communications that reach into the communities. In addition, the Navajo Nation extends into three states, which has an impact on the types of media that reach different communities throughout the region. For example, in the capital of Window Rock, all news and media outlets come out of Gallup, NM but in Tuba City, news and media comes out of Phoenix, AZ. This presents a challenge in terms of being able to provide consistent messaging regarding First Things First and early childhood development and health issues throughout the entire region.

Given the unique nature of the region, the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council would like to invest in specific types of community outreach to engage and inform parents, families, organizations and the Nation as a whole about the First Things First programs and services that are being put in place. The Navajo Nation has both traditional and cultural methods for communicating to the people of the Nation. For First Things First to be successful on the Nation, the Regional Council needs to utilize these traditions and methods for communicating.

The first means of outreach will be to submit monthly articles to the local newspapers regarding early childhood development and health as well as how First Things First is helping to expand services throughout the region. These duties will be the responsibility of the Regional Coordinator and the Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council. Local newspapers will also be used to advertise Requests for Grant Applications (RFGAs) so that more potential applicants know of these funding opportunities.

The second type of community outreach that will be pursued will be sponsorship of each of the major fairs and rodeos in the region. Navajo culture centers around social experiences, which includes social events such as regional fairs and rodeos. These events provide tremendous opportunity to provide information and awareness to a vast array of families, service providers and elected officials. Sponsorship and participation in these events would not only help to build name brand recognition in the region but it would also show the commitment of the Regional Partnership Council to young children and their families in all aspects of their life. The fairs and rodeos typically draw an average daily attendance of 15,000 families and community members.

Lastly, the Regional Partnership Council will seek to participate in other community events such as community conferences and health fairs in order to continue to build awareness about early childhood development and health programs available to children and families. These types of events will not only target families of young children but will also seek to engage service providers throughout the region who might be unfamiliar with the opportunities available through First Things First.

The Navajo Nation Regional Council staff will work directly with the Communications Division on all efforts to ensure coordination and alignment with the messages and public information materials developed.

Lead Goal: First Things First will expand public awareness of, and financial support for, early childhood development and health efforts in Arizona.

Key Measure(s):

1. Percentage of Arizonans who report that early childhood development and health issues are important.
2. Percentage of Arizonans who identify themselves as strong supporters of early childhood and health matters.

Target Population: Given the broad scope of this strategy, the intended target populations will be:

- 1) Child Care Providers
- 2) Parents and caregivers
- 3) Tribal Government Officials
- 4) Potential First Things First Grant Applicants

	SFY 2011	SFY 2012	SFY 2013
	July 1, 2010 –June 30, 2011	July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012	July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013
Proposed Service Numbers	12,500 people (10% of the population)	12,500 people (10% of the population)	12,500 people (10% of the population)

Performance Measures:

- Number of events and people reached by events sponsored.
- Number of funding announcements and people reached by funding announcements made in the local paper(s).
- Number of public service announcements and people reached by public service announcements produced per year.
- Number of RFGA (or other funding opportunity) proposals submitted for Navajo Nation Regional Partnership Council funding opportunities.
- Percentage of parents of children 0-6 who are familiar with First Things First (as measured by FTF Family and Community Survey).

SFY 2011 Expenditure Plan for Proposed Strategy

Allocation for proposed strategy	\$ <u>150,000</u>
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Budget Justification:

Fair Sponsorships: \$60,000

Justification: \$15,000 each for top Sponsorships of the Navajo Nation Fair, Western Navajo Fair, Eastern Navajo Fair, and the 4th of July Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association event.

Print Materials and Advertising: \$50,000

Placements in the local newspapers (Navajo Times, Nava-Hopi Observer, Gallup Independent) and digital marquees, radio announcements (KTNN, KGHR, etc), and brochures, fliers and any print materials needed for events or information distribution including mailings.

Other Community Events and Conferences: \$40,000

Justification: Exhibits fees and other sponsorships for smaller events and conferences on Early Childhood Education held regionally.